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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9006
INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE
RHMFIS/Joint STAFF WASHINGTON DC
RHMFIS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC

UNCLAS PANAMA 001868

SIPDIS

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DEPT FOR WHA/CEN
WHA/PPC
OIG FOR MR. KRONGARD AND AMBASSADOR MALLOY
INL
PM
DRL
INR
SOUTHCOM FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: AADP MARR MASS SNAR PINS PREL PHUM PINR PM

SUBJECT: PANAMA'S LEAHY HUMAN RIGHTS VETTING PROCEDURES

REF: A. 03 STATE 34981
1B. 05 STATE 21314
1C. 05 STATE 131486
1D. MANAGUA 00590

11. Embassy Panama's Political Section has developed a system to coordinate Leahy Amendment vetting. All candidates for USG-funded travel, training (military or civilian), or material assistance -- in-country or in the United States -- must be vetted on human rights, corruption, narcotics, or criminal grounds. Vetting is required to ensure that, to the Embassy's best knowledge, the USG does not fund travel, training, or material assistance to individuals (or groups of individuals) who have engaged in gross violations of human rights or other disqualifying activities. The legal or policy requirements governing vetting vary depending on the activity in question, and the source of funds financing the activity.

12. The Political Section coordinates vetting under the supervision of the Political Section Chief. The POL OMS will be the primary point of contact (POC). The Political Section will retain paper files (and electronic if applicable) on all vetting. Post has established a system for documenting the paper trail to demonstrate that we have conducted vettings and followed up on any derogatory findings. Post will retain the records for at least 3 years and ensure that human rights abuses involving security force units are cabled to the Department and entered into the Abuse Case Evaluation System (ACES) database.

Vetting Requirements

13. Vetting requirements vary by source of funding and whether the training is for a unit or an individual. The Panamanian equivalent of all military and police units must be vetted at Post and by the Department to be eligible for USG assistance. For Department of Defense (DOD) funded training, all individuals must be vetted at Post and by the Department. For Department of State (including International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL)) or other USG-funded training, members of the police and the military must be vetted individually at Post to be eligible for the training. Although not legally required by the Leahy

Amendment, Post policy is to request Department concurrence. However, in some instances, this may not be possible. Civilians do not need to be vetted, although as a matter of policy, Post will vet former military and police personnel as well as public servants, both civilian and military, who participate in USG sponsored training.

Standard Operating Procedures

¶4. Embassy Panama's SOP are as follows:

Step 1: The requesting agency sends the vetting request to the POL POC via email or memo. The responsible office provides information on the type of training, dates of training, and names and identifying information of participants.

Step 2: POL POC prepares a memo and returns it back to originating office for distribution. Originator circulates the names of attendees proposed for the training to CONS, DHS, DAO, DEA, LEGATT, RSA, RSO, NAS, and NCIS. The originating office is responsible for the follow-up to ensure that Post sections have completed and responded to the vetting request.

Step 3: Relevant post sections review paper and electronic, classified and unclassified files (including search of ACES database) for credible evidence of gross human rights violations perpetrated by unit(s) or individuals proposed for training.

Step 4: Sections respond in writing, within five work days, to the originating office, with the results of their file search, verifying their results with their signature on the provided form. This five work day timeframe must be adhered to in order to provide enough turn around time for Washington to clear before the training begins.

If credible derogatory information is found, this individual or unit will be struck from the list sent to Washington for clearance. Information about the nature of the offense will be entered in to the ACES database by the POL section and sent by cable to Washington.

Step 5: Upon receipt of the completed checks performed at Post, POL POC sends an unclassified (or classified, if required) cable of the list of names on whom no derogatory information was found to Western Hemisphere Affairs/Central America (WHA/CEN), and requests clearance. Post will try to ensure that the Department has at least ten working days to conduct name checks and reply to Post. Vettings for DOD funded training are valid for a period of twelve months. Vettings for other USG funded training must be repeated each time training is planned for a unit or individual.

Step 6: If Department vetting identifies no derogatory information, WHA/CEN transmits a cable to Post indicating that the training/assistance may proceed. The POC notifies the requesting office that the candidates have been cleared and the training or assistance may proceed.

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